Mushroom cultivation

1366. SHRI S. S. AHLUWALIA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that Mushroom cultivation is becoming popular and quite profitable in the country particularly in Bihar;

(b) whether Government have prepared any plan to further popularise the cultivation of Mushroom particularly in Bihar and give incentives to the farmers cultivating Mushroom in the State;

(c) if so, what are the details thereof.

(d) whether Government have studied the viability of exporting Mushroom from the country; and

(e) if so, what are the results thereof and if not, the reasons therefor ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI MULLAPPALLY RAMACHANDRAN): (a) Mushroom cultivation is becoming popular in the country. The important States are Himachal Pradesh, Uttar Pra desh, Jammu & Kashmir, Punjab, Karna taka, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Haryana and Union Territories of Chandigarh and Delhi.

(b) and (c) The Government of India have proposed to implement a scheme for cultivation of mushroom in potential States in which Bihar is not included.

(d) and (e) There is no formal study on the viability of exporting Mushroom from the country. However, Mushroom has been identified as a potential export earner and development programmes will include this aspect also.

Drought in Maharashtra

1367. DR. BAPU KALDATE : Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state :

(a) what measures have been taken by Government so far to fight the severe drought situation in the Marathwada and Vidarbha regions besides large part of the Western sugr belt in Maharashtra; and

(b) what assistance is proposed to be given to Maharashtra for long-term /short-term plan to cope with the drought in the State?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI K. C. LENKA) : (a) The relief measures being undertaken by the State Government in the drought affected areas include :—

(1) Relief employment under Employment Guarantee Scheme.

(2) Arrangements for supply of drinking water through new bore-wells, early completion of water supply scheme, repairs to old schemes, execution of temporary piped water supply schem and transportation of water through tankers/bullock-carts.

(3) The provision of fodder for the affected cattle population.

(b) It has been decided to depute a Central Team to the drought affected areas of Maharashtra to assess the extent of damage and requirements of Central assistance in the context of the Memorandum submitted by the State Government.

Drought in Rajasthan

1368. SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the steps Government have taken to tackle the drought situation in Rajasthan;

(b) what is the estimated loss due to drought there;

(c) the amount of money spent by, Gov ernment till date for drinking water 'faci lity, food distribution, medical care, crops protection & irrigation, cattle production and rehabilitation; and

(d) the items-wise details therrof ?